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NSC BRIEFING

CAMBODIA

25X1

- I. Sihanouk govt has announced that it has accorded diplomatic recognition to Communist China. This will include exchange of ambassadors.

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- A. Sihanouk had prepared public opinion by demagogic statements concerning need for "new ally" in face of alleged Western bias against Cambodia in its disputes with South Vietnam.
- B. Sihanouk may follow through with acceptance of military aid pact reportedly proffered by Peiping.
- II. Many influential Cambodians are concerned that recognition of Peiping will increase Commie subversion and jeopardize continuation US aid.
- A. Although Sihanouk still firmly in saddle, open defiance his rule may develop among conservative political and military elements who are increasingly critical of Sihanouk's one-man show.
- B. Recognition of Peiping will virtually eliminate Taipei's dwindling influence among Cambodia's 250,000 Chinese.
- III. Strong reaction can be expected from Saigon.
- A. Diem government convinced Sihanouk has grandiose plans to restore old Khmer Empire at South Vietnam's expense and hopes to achieve this goal through support of Chicoms.
- B. Diem has dwelt lately on growing internal opposition to Sihanouk and can be expected to encourage and support any move to oust him from power.

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